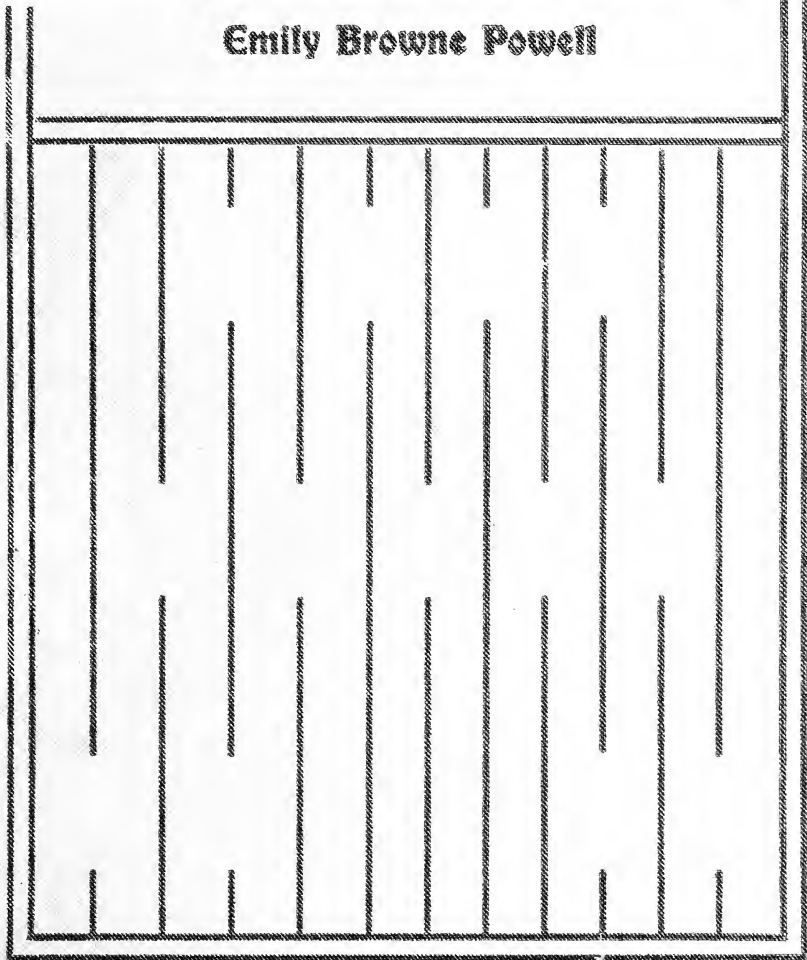


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Emily Browne Powell



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Songs *Along* the Way

Songs Along the Way

BY
EMILY BROWNE POWELL



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To my husband
this little book is affectionately
inscribed

Prelude

*As the faint perfume, strangely sweet,
Within the faded blossom lingers,
As the low echoes still repeat
A song when ended by the singers,*

*So memories of happy days
Long haunt the heart with lingering glory,
And Fancy oft, in careless lays,
Would fain embalm the pleasant story.*

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Songs Along the Way

Songs Along the Way

The Story of the Ages

A cry comes ringing down the ages vast :

“ Forget not, ye who on the earth abide,
That we, the countless myriads of the past,
Once lived, and loved, and wept, and toiled,
and died.

“ Our works live after us ;— ye see them yet,
By that strange river where the lotus grows,
In Grecian column, eastern minaret,
And on the hills by which the Tiber flows.

“ Our deeds yet live ;— the world remembers still
The spot where Sparta’s brave three hundred lie,
And tales of Marathon the pulses thrill !
O day of glory ! thou canst never die !

“ We were the conquering legions of old Rome ;
We wore the knightly cross on Syria’s plain :
Age after age to you the records come —
Always the same sad tale of strife and pain.

“ Ye are today as we were yesterday;
Tomorrow, as it swiftly passes by,
Shall write for you the same brief history:
‘ They lived, and toiled, and died,—and here
they lie.’ ”

O silent lips that speak! O mighty dead!
Ye have not lived and toiled and died in vain!
Little by little, from the low-bowed head,
Age after age helps lift the load of pain!

Little by little to our waiting eyes
Broadens the glorious light that makes us free;
Little by little our cramped souls arise,
And grope toward their higher destiny!

Little by little sinks the strife of creeds,
As in our path the stumblingblocks decrease;
The cross ye bore, of old, to bloody deeds,
Now blossoms with the snowy flowers of peace.

God speed the day for which the prophet yearned,
The happy reign of love for earth in store,
When all the swords to ploughshares shall be turned,
And nations shall learn warfare nevermore!

In the Saddle

Adown the street and through the town
We cantered, near a score together,
Then to the foothills, warm and brown,
Amid the mellow summer weather.

Tinted with gold and amethyst,
Calmly the twilight skies bent over,
While wandering cloudlets, drooping, kissed
The mountain top, their gray old lover.

Reluctant shadows, downward pressed,
Thronged slowly from their far dominions,
While through the gateway of the West
The restless night wind trailed its pinions.

On, gallant steeds! time will not dwell;
Hours long for pain are short for pleasure.
List how the wild notes sink and swell,
And young feet tread the dancers' measure.

Oh happy hearts! oh rest from care!
We left behind all thought of sorrow.
Lulled in the soft and dreamy air,
What reck we of the vague tomorrow?

There, hush the music, dim the light,
To horse once more; Time points a warning.
Across the dusky verge of night
We slowly ride into the morning.

The low "Good bye," the withering flowers,
Life's changeless story are repeating.
Float back into the past, bright hours,
Like many another, fair but fleeting.

But Memory, with tender hand,
Gathering the scattered threads together,
Weaves in her web a silver strand —
That ride mid shadowy summer weather.

Tehuantepec

In coming days, when winds blow high,
And white foam sweeps across the deck,
Oft we'll recall a night gone by,
The night we crossed Tehuantepec—

The stranger friends, the silent skies,
The dim cliffs rising from the sea,
The youthful hearts, the beaming eyes,
And voices ringing merrily.

The voice may take a sadder strain,
The fluttering locks be changed to gray,
The hopes we bound with youth's bright chain
In mocking beauty melt away,

Yet be our hearts, where'er we roam,
Mid youth's decay or fortune's wreck,
As pure as when we watched the foam
That crested wild Tehuantepec!

Sweetheart

A tiny songstress on a swaying bough,
Joyous with life in the soft breath of May,
Sang cheerily and clear, the morning through,
A song I've heard her trilling many a day —
 “Sweetheart! Sweetheart!”

Not only mid the warm and fragrant breeze
Blowing across the roses of the spring,
But while the fierce March stormwind shook the
 trees,
With silvery notes unfaltering did she sing,
 “Sweetheart! Sweetheart!”

Though oft I ask what Fortune doth provide,
Or buildeth she her nest by cot or hall,
She only turns her dainty head aside
And sings, as if the one word answered all,
 “Sweetheart! Sweetheart!”

Thus ever sings my heart, thou clear-voiced bird,
In unison with thee the whole day long;
Though the hushed lips may utter scarce a word,
Yet with each pulse-beat thrills thy tender song,
 “Sweetheart! Sweetheart!”

Amid these spring days of exceeding peace,
And through the far, dim length of coming years,
Within my soul thy song shall never cease,
But still ring on through joy or care or tears —
“Sweetheart! Sweetheart!”

Falling Asleep

Drifting away, drifting away,—

Away from earth to the realms of sleep,
The shadowy land that lies between
The world of life and the world unseen,
That land where weary ones cease to weep.

Drifting away, drifting away,—

Away from trouble and care and pain :
Come, white angel of sleep, and shed
Visions of beauty around my bed ;
Fold thy light wings over my brain.

Drifting away, drifting away :

The world and its cares grow less and less ;
Swiftly the shadows around me glide —
Faces and forms in a mingled tide,—
Lulling me into forgetfulness.

On All Souls' Eve

Traveler, on All Souls' Eve beware
Of roads that cross — the dead walk there!
— *Old English Legend*.

Why walk so late? Why walk so slow?
The stars are dim; the wild winds blow;
Darkly the rushing waters flow,
On All Souls' Eve.

The dead walk slow; the dead walk late!
Where yon roads cross, whoe'er will wait
Till midnight strikes the hour of fate
On All Souls' Eve,

And, waiting, call the dead most dear,
Shall see the shrouded ones appear,
Shall walk beside them without fear
On All Souls' Eve.

The dead most dear! And can it be?
O fair lost love, come back to me!
Oh for one earthly hour with thee
On All Souls' Eve!

My love, my love, I see thy face!
Thou comest with the old slow grace!
Come thou once more to my embrace,
On All Souls' Eve.

Let me forget, sweet one so dear,
The weary past, the future drear,
In the short hour that thou art here
On All Souls' Eve.

O speak to me the words I crave,
Since conquering Love e'en Death may brave,
And thus hath brought thee from thy grave
On All Souls' Eve.

My pleading is but idle breath:
Thy tender mouth no fond word saith;
It keeps the mystery of death
On All Souls' Eve.

Thy peace my longing cannot harm;
Thy spirit feels the heavenly calm,
While mine is full of earth's alarm
On All Souls' Eve.

We walk together, yet apart;
E'en standing almost heart to heart,
As far from me as heaven thou art
On All Souls' Eve.

Farewell, sweet love! Whate'er my pain,
As the slow seasons wax and wane,
I will not call thee back again
On All Souls' Eve.

Sweetest Rest

Press to my breast thy small, sweet face,
O gentle babe of mine;
Thy mother's love encircles thee
Like the halo round a shrine,
And never a waft of the life outside
Troubles the calm of thine.

Thou fair wee woman, kindly Fate
Thy future may endow,
And many a pillow soft as down
Receive thy tired brow,
Yet ne'er, till in thy last low bed,
Thou'lt rest as sweet as now.

For thine can but be woman's lot
Of love, and care, and pain,—
To cherish tender flowers that pine
For the sunshine and the rain,—
To send fair ships across the sea
That come not back again,—

To force unwilling eyes to smile
 When teardrops fain would start,—
Perchance to yield thy treasures up
 For pottage in Life's mart,—
Thankful for e'en the crumbs of love
 To feed a hungry heart.

Softly above thy shining head
 The years will come and go ;
Some day, to thee, the sweet old tale
 Be whispered soft and low ;
But the love that shelters thee today
 Is the truest thou canst know.

So sleep, my babe, my precious one,
 Sleep on, and take thy rest ;
The lambs are sheltered in the fold
 The birdlings in the nest,
And thou today art safe from harm—
 Safe on thy mother's breast.

Homesick

O far white cloud, slow floating o'er the plains
Down to the bosom of the shining sea,
Unloose my homesick spirit from its chains,
And bid me in thy wanderings follow thee !

Fain would I follow to the sunset hills,
Purple and misty in the changing glow,
As down the west the lingering radiance thrills,
While o'er the east the twilight shadows grow.

Thou'lt spread thy pinions to the fresh'ning wind ;
The waves will chant to thee their low refrain —
That old sweet song that ever seems to find
In human hearts a vaguely answering strain.

Should kindly eyes that mine were wont to greet
Uplift to thee, slow floating to thy rest,
This message from the absent one repeat :
“ Old scenes are fairest ; old, tried friends are best.”

Falling Leaves

Fading, fluttering, flying,
The last bright leaves drop down,—
Springtime's verdant glory,
Autumn's radiant crown,—
To lie in wind-swept masses,
Withered, sere, and brown.

Bright was their twinkling beauty
When summer mornings broke
And in the drowsy coverts
The feathered songsters woke,
While from all haunts of nature
Her myriad voices spoke,

Or when, through hazy autumn,
They wore their changing glow,
In russet, gold, and crimson
Flitting to earth below,
To lie, at last, in silence
Under a shroud of snow.

Life, thy beauty withers ;
Like the trees thou art :
Fading, fluttering, flying,
Summer hopes depart,
And lo ! the snow of winter
Falls upon the heart.

Vacation Song

Come, lads and lasses,
A soft wind is blowing,
Rustling the alders
Beside the brook growing

Summer has found us,
And nature rejoices.
“Leave the dull schoolbooks!”
Cry all the glad voices.

Down in the meadows
Are buttercups shining;
Bright in the hedges
The wild roses twining;

Butterflies everywhere,
Bees in the clover;
Whiz goes the humming bird,
Flame-throated rover.

List how the linnet
His sweet song is trying,
And hark to the meadow lark
Gaily replying.

Bird song, and blossom,
And sunshine together—
Who would have lessons
While June rules the weather?

A Game of Consequence

Young John went briskly out, one morn,
To mend the fence.

But man is weak when maids beguile ;
A gossip found him on the stile
Playing “ Consequence ”—

Playing with Jess and Mollie and Jean,
’Neath the oak tree’s shade,
While the sun climbed high in the sky of morn
And the cows that leaned toward the rustling corn
The fence boards swayed.

A lively game of “ Consequence ”
They had that day —
What “ he ” and “ she ” and “ the world ” said,
Till pretty Jean grew rosy red
And ran away.

That eve young John met pretty Jean
By the mended fence.
He said — she said — she blushed again,
But this time did not fly,—and then —
The consequence !

The cows stood near with wondering eyes:
The cows were dumb;
But the farm boy, hidden behind the hay,
Who represented “the world” that day,
Said, “Yum! yum!”

What the Wind Said

- The voice of the wind was soft and low,
And this to my ear it seemed to say:
“O come with me where the wild flowers grow,
‘Over the hills and far away.’
- “I know the path to the shadowy dell
Where the violet opens its soft blue eyes;
I know where the buds of the cowslip swell,
And the dainty cups of the crocus rise.
- “I haste where my darling, the windflower frail,
Is shyly awaiting my fond embrace;
I ruffle the pools in the sunny vale
That mirror the fair narcissus’ face.
- “I go where the tinkling waters flow:
I find the fern in each hidden nook;
I know where the silverleaf bends low
To trail its fingers along the brook.
- “The snowdrop gleams from the springing grass;
The iris lures me with gentle wiles;
The daisy nods as I lightly pass;
And the heart’s-ease lifts its face and smiles.”

And ever seemed the refrain to be,
As I hearkened the voice of the spring wind gay:
“ O hasten, O hasten, and come with me
‘ Over the hills and far away ’ ! ”

A Vision

A gray rock towering by the water side ;
The low lap ! lap ! of the advancing tide ;
A sun-browned child, dreamy and wistful-eyed.

Along the ripples sea birds curve and dip ;
From the blue distance comes a home-bound ship ;
Out through the far-off mist-gates white sails slip.

A fishing boat rocks idly to and fro ;
Along the sands the fishers come and go ;—
Hark ! on the wind, the sailors' " Yo ! heave ho ! "

O homesick shell, thy low imprisoned roar
Brings back the sounding sea, the cliff-walled shore,
And the dear home that I may see no more.

A Mother's Answer

O mother of babies strong and fair,
 Tell, to one who has none,
Which of your dainty darlings there—
Golden or auburn or chestnut hair—
 To you is the loveliest one.

“Ask the mother bird in her nest
 Up in the rocking tree
Which of her birdlings to her looks best,
Which of the nestlings under her breast
 She shelters most tenderly.”

Mother love answers readily,
 Mother love fond and true,
“A miracle each are my birds to me,
No matter what color their feathers may be
 Or how they may look to you.”

Love's Messenger

Bird with the breast of scarlet,
The roses withering lie,
And red leaves drearily shiver and fall
As the restless winds sweep by.
Thy flight thou'lt soon be winging
To the Southland far away:
Bear thou a sweet, sweet message
To my soldier boy, I pray.

Bird, I love him, I love him,
But I did not tell him so ;
My spirit is weary with longing,
But that he does not know.
The heartache and the heartbreak
Of my loneliness and pain
Perchance his faithful soul may feel
In thy sweet, familiar strain.

On the banks of Southern rivers,
Along the Southern plain,
The satin sheen of the snowy flowers
Is dark with a crimson rain ;
Low mounds are thick in the sunshine
Where brave hearts lie at rest,
And over one a bird keeps watch,
A bird with a scarlet breast.

The Greatest of These is Charity

Three women stood together as the chime
Of distant bells rang in the Christmas time;
And lo! a vision radiant and fair,
A Heavenly Presence, shone before them there.
The dear Lord stood revealed; he asked each one,
“In this bright year, for me what hast thou done?”

The first said: “Lord, thy voice seemed calling me
To distant lands, thy messenger to be.
To carry on thy work I have not failed;
In danger often, yet I have not quailed.
Among the heathen I have cast my lot,
To teach the faith to those who know thee not.”

The second said: “Lord, I have tried to be
A faithful steward. With full hands and free
I’ve given of my goods to feed the poor;
Oft I’ve brought hope to those who hoped no
more.
Of pain and sorrow I have eased the smart,
And taught to thank thee many a grateful heart.”

The third stood humbly there, with downcast eyes.
“I have no wealth to give,—I am not wise.
Dear Lord, 'tis little I have done for thee,
But I have walked with all in charity.
At others' sins, I, conscious of my own,
Point no accusing finger, cast no stone.”

The Master smiled down on the drooping head.
“Whoe'er loves mine, loves also me,” he said.
“Whoe'er shows mercy shows it unto me.
She hath all graces who hath charity.”

Farewell

Summer and youth, farewell.
The rose leaves fall with the rain ;
 Soon winter will come, and go,—
 The spring winds gather and blow,
And the roses bloom again :
But faded youth ne'er yet
 Revived at the touch of spring,
And south winds never set
 Dead hopes a-blossoming.
 Farewell, farewell.

To sunny isles afar
Upon the silver main
 The swift-winged swallows go,
 But, after the sleet and snow,
They will return again :
The nestlings of the heart
 Come not at spring's behest ;
Forever, when they depart,
 Remaineth an empty nest.
 Farewell, farewell.

Through the Sunset

Long shadows sweep across the sky,
As day sinks slowly in the sea ;
We ride together, you and I,
Along the hill-slopes silently.

We ride together, as of old ;
Through the soft haze the sun mists weave,
Out of the sunset barred with gold,
Into the starry, purple eve.

Lulled by the rhythm of the tide,
The silent strand before us lies,
While gates of glory open wide
Around the crest of Tamalpais.

What is the charm the hill-slopes lack ?
What brightness of the past is o'er ?
The smiles of friends who come not back,
The hopes of days that are no more.

Ghosts ride between us on our way ;
Their shadowy steeds press ours apart ;
Against my arm their bridles sway ;
Their hoof-beats strike upon my heart.

The Schoolhouse Flag

Above the children of the land
Our country's banner floats today,
And boy and girl, with earnest eyes,
Gaze at it from their play.

What read they in its shining folds,
That on the summer breezes swell?
To them—the nation's hope and pride—
What stories does it tell?

We "children of a larger growth"
See visions, as its stripes unfold—
The struggle of a nation's birth,
New England's farmers bold,

The icy Delaware, the huts
Of Valley Forge, the reeling deck
Of Perry's ship, the valiant men
Who scaled Chapultepec!

And later, darker years unroll —
How vivid now the vision grows!
We hear the tramp of marching hosts,
The strife of kindred foes!

The loved, the wept through weary years,
From many a battlefield they throng,
Wrapped in the faded coats of blue
That have been their shrouds so long!

They glide before us, silent, calm,
And the old grief breaks forth and cries,
“Why come ye back, O loved and lost,
With the grave dust in your eyes?”

“Think you the living can forget?
Ah, no! rest in the peaceful grave!
Stout hearts and loyal guard today
The flag you died to save.”

Fling out the flag! O happy child,
Born in these later years of peace,
When war a vision only seems,
And wealth and ease increase,

Look proudly on each shining star
That gleams on yon fair field of blue—
Learn reverence for each fluttering fold
That brought such joy to you!

O child, be worthy of such sires!
The blood of heroes is your dower
Be ready when your duty calls,
When God shall strike the hour,—

Ready to follow, if need be,
“Old Glory” through the battle grim,
But never let its fair folds trail,
Nor one bright star grow dim!

John G. Whittier

Softly the eddy leaves flit down,
From trees with autumn tints aflame,
Upon a new-made grave where lies
A Friend — it is a fitting name.

Friend of the people, close to thine
The strong heart of the nation beat:
Its wrongs awoke thy clarion cry;
Its joys, thy folk-songs soft and sweet.

New England claims thine honored dust,
But not to her alone belongs
The glory of thy deathless fame,
Sweet singer of a people's songs!

From North and South, from East and West,
Above thy grave the pilgrims bend;
Their falling tears awake thee not.
A nation mourns for thee, O Friend!

Returning

In weariness and pain
And longing, as when thou wast all to me,
To make thy breast my refuge from alarms,
To rest once more within thy sheltering arms,
Mother, I come to thee.

Out in the wide, wide world
I've wandered many a dreary mile alone.
Its thorny pathways pierced my aching feet;
Cold on my head its pit'less tempests beat;—
Take back thy weary one.

Distrustful, proud, and sad,
Far different lessons from thy precepts mild
I've gathered since our life paths swept apart.
I bring not back the childish, trusting heart,—
But 'tis thy child.

O face of womanhood!
Deeply the outer world has stamped its chill,
But, gentle mother, in the saddened eyes
That old-time likeness to thine own yet lies;—
Thou'lt love thine own child still.

A Modern Parable

Footsore and dusty from the world's highway,
A woman with clear eyes and earnest face
Came and complained in bitter words, one day,
To Justice, seated in the market place.

“O Justice, on your hill a temple stands,
Whose treasures, rich and rare, my coming wait;
But, as I entrance seek with eager hands,
My brother thrusts me back and bars the gate.”

The fair, stern goddess calmly answered: “Nay!
First right the wrong that shadows thine own soul;
Thy weaker sister, fallen by the way,
Clings to thy skirts and keeps thee from the goal.

“Thy conscious powers her feebleness deride,
And bid her dazzled vision seek the light;
But she, with want and suffering at her side,—
What eye hath she for glories on the height?

“Lift thou thy sister! Make thy presence sweet!
Thy strong, protecting arms around her twine;
Shield her with love until her stumbling feet
Grow firm, and eager to keep step with thine.

“Then, as you turn your faces to the day,
And climb the height, unfaltering and free,
Who shall withstand you on your upward way?
What gate can bar you from your destiny?

My Castle

I owned a wonderful castle:
 The banner thereof was Truth;
Its hangings were golden fancies;
 Its curtains, the visions of youth.
I locked the door of my castle,
 And hid away the key,
Vowing, for fear of intruders,
 That locked it should ever be.

But there came to the door of my castle,
 One eve, in the twilight thin,
A beautiful boyish stranger,
 Crying, "Pray, let me in!"
His hair was of twisted sunbeams,
 His eyes like the bluebird's wing,
And his voice as sweet as the music
 Of bells which the fairies ring.

For a while I refused to listen,
 But he only pleaded the more,
Until, at last, I relented,
 And opened my castle door.

But, having once gained an entrance,
The boy determined to stay,—
Assumed control of my castle,
And snatched my scepter away.

Since then he has reigned in my castle;
He holds it whether or no;
But his presence is like the sunlight,
And I would not have him go.
O Love, my beautiful stranger,
Thou and I shall never part,
But thou shalt reign forever
In the castle of my heart.

Afloat

Drift softly on the silent tide,
My boat, my boat; the wind is still.
By wood-fringed banks we slowly glide,
Borne onward at the current's will.

From azure heights a sent'nel star
Upon our rippling track looks down,
While, one by one, the lamps afar
Begin to light the distant town.

At times the twilight hush is stirred
By cry of some wild forest thing,
Or soft note of a sleepy bird
That lifts its head from 'neath its wing.

Drift slowly on, my boat, my boat;
A lotus breath is in the air.
What happiness with thee to float!
Why should I seek the world and care?

Vague yesterday is of the past;
E'en half forgotten is today;
Tonight is mine,—so calm, so vast;
Tomorrow? — put the thought away!

Miserable Sinners

The Lenten sunshine, softened and subdued,
Touched with its tender radiance, many-hued,
The throng that knelt, the stately church within,
In genteel penitence for genteel sin.
“Miserable sinners!” murmured many a one,
With comfortable sense of duty done.

A wan-faced woman crept into the room,
And sought a corner hidden in the gloom.
No dainty sinner she: Shame’s burning hand
Had stamped upon her brow his cruel brand;
Remorse and Want and Pain for many a day
Had walked beside her on her weary way.

Down on her knees she sank, while tears like rain
Rolled o’er her hollow cheeks. She moaned in pain,
And beat her breast, and grovelled on the floor,
And, agonizing, whispered o’er and o’er,
“A miserable sinner, yet I look to thee!
Have mercy, Lord, have mercy upon me!”

Again the organ's swelling notes were heard;
A sweet old-fashioned hymn the soft air stirred:
It spoke to many a heart of childhood's days,
Of mother love, of household prayer and praise.
The woman, listening, crouched upon the floor,
Hushed her wild prayers, and sobbed and moaned no
more.

The sermon, smooth with many a well-turned phrase,
Led well-bred penitents through flowery ways;
But in its rounded periods, I fear,
Souls sick and tortured found but little cheer.
At length, the graceful benediction o'er,
The throng moved slowly toward the outer door.

A halt — a bustle — “What was that you said?
The woman yonder dead?” “Yes, look! stone dead!”
The Pharisees their rich robes drew away
As if pollution dwelt in that poor clay,
And coldly wondered, as they hurried by,
Why such as she chose such a place to die.

A man came down the aisle, with bearing calm,
His fair young wife leaning upon his arm.
He started as his gaze fell on the dead,
And all the color from his proud face fled.
His fond wife saw him blanch, and felt the start,
And thought, “The sight has touched his tender
heart.”

That night the outcast, colder than the stone
Her resting place, lay in the morgue alone.
Of sin and shame, from her still youthful face,
Death's pitying fingers had removed all trace.
Perchance the Master, at her soul's release,
Said: "I condemn thee not. Go thou in peace."

Backward and forward in a shadowy room,
A man paced ceaselessly amid the gloom,
From fierce remorse seeking relief in vain,
Writhing like one in purgatorial pain,
Crying, "On me, most vile and self-abhorred —
Miserable sinner! — O have mercy, Lord!"

At Twoscore

The ball is over; the hour is late;
But I sit by the fire in this quiet room,
Watching the flames in the glowing grate
And the shadows that dance in the corner's
gloom.

Across in the mirror my face I see:
There are silver threads in the dusky hair;
Eyes saddened by years look out at me;
And along the forehead are lines of care.

My fair young daughter, dreaming, smiles;
Her bright hair gleams on her pillow white.
A waking dream my heart beguiles;
I saw a ghost at the ball tonight.

Mid the music's swell and the mellow light,
As the dancers' restless feet flew fast,
In a pair of young eyes, brown and bright,
I saw a ghost from my far-off past.

The lights grew dim and the music faint,
And far away, it seemed to me,
I stood again in a garden quaint,
And just beyond was the shining sea.

The breath of the white magnolia flower,
 Heavy and sweet, was in the air ;
The moonlight fell in a silver shower ;
 Youth seemed eternal, and life was fair.

Long, long ago that summer fled ;
 Its glory passed from our changing lives.
Its hopes, like its flowers, have long been dead,
 And Memory's ghost alone survives.

But still, in that garden far away,
 Flowers just as sweet perfume the air,
And, watching my daughter's face, I say,
 " Youth is eternal, and life is fair."

Old Eyes and Young Hearts

Fair Lillian sits by the casement vines,
Her bright hair touched by the sunlight's sheen,
Her fingers toying amid the leaves —
As sweet a picture as ever was seen.
Young Oliver, gazing with heart in his eyes,
Thinks her an angel in mortal guise.

Her mother knits in a corner near,
And says, "Young people were not inclined
To squander their time when I was young";
So she gives them a tangled skein to wind.
The young man smiles, and says to himself,
"That was Cupid's suggestion, the cunning elf!"

Bending low o'er the twisted strands,
Golden ringlets touch sunbrowned cheek.
Didst learn, O mother, when thou wast young,
The wondrous language bright eyes speak?
The good dame's needles falter and cease,
And she rests in dreams of untroubled peace.

Waking at length, in mute dismay
She stares at the picture before her eyes;
The young man's arms round the maid are twined,
And her shining head on his bosom lies,
While the skein to the floor has been left to fall,
And the kitten plays with the half-wound ball.

The Lost Treasure

Sweet Hope, why turn thy weary eyes
Thus westward to the sea?
Dost think the signals on the wind
Have aught of joy for thee?
Still dreaming of thy treasure ship?
Alas! dost thou not know
That the ship of Hope, with silken sails,
Outweathered not the wintry gales,
But foundered long ago?

Her snowy pennant on the breeze
No longer proudly waves;
No signal hail can reach her crew,
Low in the coral caves;
Her shapely hull and cargo fair
Lie under the sweeping sea.
Wildly the mermaids revel there,
And mid their unbound, floating hair
Twine gems that were for me.

We waited long, sweet Hope and I,
For tidings from afar ;
Some relic of our treasure lost,
A rope or drifting spar.
Then came the unwelcome ship of Care :
Alone she reached the shore.
She brought us weary, toilsome years.
We took the load with falling tears
For the bright dream that was o'er.

At Nightfall

As twilight shadows gathered o'er the land,
A little child came slowly from her play,
A bunch of flowers, half withered, in her hand,
Plucked from the dusty herbage of the way.

Around my neck one tiny arm she twined,
And laid the faded gift upon my knees.
"The path was steep, the flowers were hard to find;
I tried to bring you better ones than these."

Where paths are toilsome and where flowers are few,
Through the long day we older children roam;
But, with our faded blossoms, mid the dew
Of gathering twilight, we come slowly home.

Father, when, at the setting of life's sun,
Our poor, imperfect work thine eyes review,
Thou wilt not judge us by the little done,—
Thou wilt remember what we tried to do.

Faded

She took the starry, blue-eyed flowers
From her own shining hair.
“Sir knight of mine,” she gaily said,
“Thy lady’s colors wear ;
Faithful ’tis as my love for thee,
The language that they bear.”

She fastened them upon my breast,
Praising their azure hue,
While I, assenting, only saw
Her eyes of sunny blue.
“Wilt keep them well?” O’er hand and flower
I vowed, a knight most true.

’Twas years ago. I oped, by chance,
A casket old today,
O’er which the dust of years forgot
Had gathered deep and gray.
Within, a spray of withered flowers
Was fondly laid away.

Her token! I had kept them well,
Though lack of sun and showers
Had dimmed the brightness that they wore
In those lost summer hours —
Fit emblem of her love, alas!
That faded with the flowers.

I saw her yester eve — the one
So fair in memory.
Deceit dwelt in the brilliant eyes
That stole my heart from me,
And hard lines marred the sunny mouth
I loved when twenty-three.

I saw her mid the pomp and wealth
That gild her false life o'er.
One glance, and with a sigh I turned
Back to my books once more,
Thankful that love of twenty-three
Sleeps well at forty-four.

In Memoriam

“My name is Life,” a radiant angel said ;
I bring the sacred bliss of motherhood,”
Then turned to go his heavenward way, when, lo!
Another angel on the threshold stood !

Before the awful glory of that face
The bright first-comer bowed his shining head.
“The smiles that welcome me must melt in tears,
Since thou art here, O brother Death,” he said.

Mid twilight's gathering gloom Death entered there ;
Whispered, “ The Master calls thee ; come up
higher ” ;
Closed to all earthly things the earnest eyes ;
And set his seal upon the lips of fire.

“She is not dead, but sleeping,” saith the Lord,
But tears are falling like the summer rain
For her, who, wearing woman's crown of love,
Sank 'neath the weight of woman's cross of pain.

In War Times

Breeze of the summer morning,
While the house is hushed in sleep,
I hear thy rustling pinions
Over my garden sweep.

A moment pause in flitting
Along the silent sea;
A boon of love and pity
I pray thee grant to me.

On the burning shore of Cuba,
Kindly but stranger eyes
Watch by a couch of suffering,
Where a brave young soldier lies.

Parched are his lips with fever,
And he sighs, as his senses roam,
For the cool pine-perfumed breezes
That haunt his northern home.

Go, sweet breeze of the mountains,
And shed from thy healing wings
The cool breath of the forest,
To calm his murmurings.

Lift the dark locks, whose masses
Over his forehead stray,
And touch his eyelids like kisses
From soft lips far away.

Though he be at death's threshold,
Weary and faint with pain,
Thy sweet old-time caresses
Shall win him to health again.

Dreams of Summer

A song of summer, beautiful summer,
Sweet with its voices, sing thou to me —
The splash of waters, the quiver of leaflets,
The trill of a bird in a whispering tree.

A vision of summer, beautiful summer,
Fair as its roses, bring thou to me —
The gleam of dewdrops, the glory of sunlight,
The brightness of old upon valley and sea.

O haunting summer, beautiful summer,
Only a phantom thou comest today ;
Thy birds are silent, thy roses are faded,
And faded the dreams that were fairer than
they !

The Vow

Thou shy and laughing maiden,
Why are thy cheeks so bright?
Whose footsteps lingered at the gate
With thine so long tonight?—
So long
Beside the gate tonight?

“Young Roland lingered at the gate;
He would not let me go.
He vows he'll love me fond and true
Till stars shall cease to glow—
So true
Till stars shall cease to glow.

“'Twas sweet to listen, but, as yet,
To wed I'm not inclined.
I tell him with averted head,
I don't quite know my mind—
As yet,
I don't quite know my mind.”

Thou sad-eyed, silent maiden,
Why now thy cheeks so pale ?
And where is he who loves but thee
Though every star should fail ? —
Still true,
Though every star should fail ?

“ His vow was false ! the stars burn on ;
His love was as the wind ;
But, now, when knowledge is but pain,
Too well I know my mind —
Alas !
Too well I know my mind ! ”

Memories

A robin's carol, for a moment heard,
 To faithful memory brings back again
The saucy chirrup of a vagrant bird
Balancing lightly, by the soft wind stirred,
 Upon an elm bough near a schoolhouse pane.

A listening child forgets her spelling book ;
 The bright-eyed bird is calling her to go
Across the meadows to the sunny nook
Where, on the margin of a silver brook,
 The fair blue iris and the catkins grow.

The distant, drowsy murmur of the bees
 Paints pictures that nor time nor tears can dim,
Of sweet old gardens amid blossoming trees,
Of lazy cattle, standing to the knees
 In buttercups along a river's rim.

Sometimes I catch a far-off sea bird's cry ;
 Again the surges beat a stormy strand ;
In sodden heaps the leaves of autumn lie ;
And through my curtained casement comes the sigh
 Of weary winds across a lonesome land.

There Remaineth a Rest for the People of God

A little longer, yet a little longer,
O weary hands that slacken and fall down,
Bear up the cross; for "him who overcometh"
Waiteth the crown.

A little longer, yet a little longer,
O aching heart, with care and sorrow sore,
Bear thou the pain; soon, in God's peace eternal,
Thou'lt ache no more.

A little longer, yet a little longer,
O tired feet that fain would cease to roam,
E'en though the way be rough and tempests lowering,
The path leads home.

A little longer, yet a little longer,
Look up, O Faith! why waver and grow pale?
Soon shalt thou see, with raptured eye and tearless,
Beyond the veil!

Then and Now

1861—1891

Once more from all our soldier graves
Sweet wafts of fragrance rise,
Like holy incense softly shed
O'er altars of sacrifice.
Once more the fair flowers droop their heads
Our martyred ones above,
To show that mightier than death
Reigneth our deathless love.

Called by the music's swelling notes,
What thronging memories come
Of days when ranks of comrades true
Marched to the fife and drum,
Of camp and scout and midnight watch,
Of many a hard-fought fray
When men who wore the loyal blue
Faced men who wore the gray !

Peacefully now their low green banks
The Southern rivers lave.
In peace o'er many a bloody field
The tasseled corn rows wave.
Sweet Peace and Plenty rule the land
Again from North to South,
And the timid wild bird builds her nest
In the silent cannon's mouth.

What though a note of war's alarm
Be flung across the sea?
What though a foreign monarch cry,
"Answer for this to me!"?
At the threat that fires the Northern blood
The South wheels into place:
Who menaces "Old Glory" now
A mighty foe must face.

"Keep back your throngs!" we make reply;
Our freedom cost too dear
To peril it that all earth's scum
May find a refuge here.
Still may the honest and the true,
Whate'er their creed or race,
Within our ample borders find
A peaceful dwelling place;

But for the idle and the vile,
The dregs of other lands,
The drones who seek to share the wealth
Hard-earned by honest hands,—
For the assassin, blood-begrimed,
Fleeing a righteous doom,—
Beneath the folds of yonder flag
There never will be room!

Sleep on, O soldiers, 'neath the flowers
Dewed with a nation's tears,
While o'er the land ye died to save
Peacefully roll the years!
Of foes without, of foes within,
What fear have we today,
When, shoulder to shoulder with the blue,
Stand the men who wore the gray!

Early Called

The tender Shepherd gently said,
As he watched where the happy children played :
“ My earthly pastures are passing fair,
But wolves and pitfalls are many there.
Often the paths are white with heat ;
Often the driving tempests beat ;
The flowers are thorny ; the winds are cold :
Come, sinless lambs, to my heavenly fold.”
“ Come,” he said to the fair-haired child,
And she lifted her sunny face and smiled.
The dark-eyed boy the summons heard,
And bent his head at the whispered word.
Hark ! the rustle of unseen wings,—
A far, faint strain that an angel sings,—
And lo ! they have passed away in a breath,
Through the shadowy gate that men call death.

Auf Wiedersehen

The paths that first our footsteps pressed
Linger in dreams, though years are long,
And haunting voices from the past
Croon to us like a cradle song.
We long for those familiar ways,
The lotus land of childhood's days.

They call to us across the plains,
They signal us along the seas,—
“Are other skies as fair as this?
Are other flowers as sweet as these?
O come to us, and find once more
The fairy realm of days of yore.”

But when we seek that cherished spot,
Lo! from the land we leave behind
Stretch hands that will not be denied,
And voices cry upon the wind,
“Come back! love's roots are in the heart!
You may not tear such bonds apart!”

Sweet friend, together we have walked
On Life's broad highway many a year.
The duties wrought, the burdens borne,
Make us to one another dear.
Your joys were ours when you were glad;
Your griefs were ours when you were sad.

Good bye! —the clinging hands unclasp —
But, gentle friend, where'er you rove,
You cannot wander from our hearts,
You cannot go beyond our love!
“No sweeter woman e'er drew breath!”
Come back to us, Elizabeth!

To an Absent One

Good night, my love, this last night of the year!
The hourglass tells its swiftly wasting sands.
Soon will a stranger at the gates appear
With harbingers of joy in his young hands.

Yet will a sigh our greeting smile displace,
For the dead Past in shrouds upon his bier;
No fair young presence ever can efface
The tender memories of this dear Old Year.

Deeper and darker grow the shadows gray;
Around my heart they gather like a pall.
Would that my hands in thy strong clasping lay!
Then would the future wear no gloom at all.

“Good night!” I whisper through the midnight calm.
Thy spirit listens my low words to hear.
God keep thee, best beloved, this night from harm,
And bless to thee the coming glad New Year!

“Feed My Lambs”

Written on a Friend's Ordination.

Dear Lord, with patient face,
And sad eyes ever gazing tenderly,
Why standest thou so steadfast at my door,
Asking the same low question o'er and o'er —
“Son, lovest thou me?”?

Thou knowest I love thee, Lord!
Am I not leaving all to follow thee?
Have I not torn each idol from its seat
And cast it down, all shattered, at thy feet?
What is it that thou may'st not ask of me?

Thy face is still so grave!
Have I so grieved thee by my stubborn pride?
I know my many stumblings hurt thee sore:
Help me, I pray, to turn and sin no more!
O draw my footsteps closer to thy side!

Thou askest still the same!
How shall I prove the love and faith I hold?
“Thy lambs,” dear Lord? And lies therein thy
need?
Thy cherished lambs thou wishest me to feed?
To seek the lost ones straying from thy fold?

The way is dark and drear,
And often must be climbed with aching feet!
How will they hear or heed my trembling voice,
If at thine own they turn not nor rejoice —
Thy voice with tender pity always sweet?

Dear Lord, thy will be done!
Help me to know no other wish than thine!
Thy love can light the path, though dark and long;
Thy power can make the faltering footsteps strong,
And speak through feeble lips with voice divine!

By the Sea

The young leaves spring and violets wake,
As the soft wind brings the rain.
The wild bird chirps to her mate in the tree:
She knows not care or pain;
Her heart rejoices with nature's heart,
That the spring has come again.

The ships sail out and the ships sail in
As the welcome breezes blow;
The sailors are singing the same old songs,
With swaying rhythm slow,
As when, a child upon the shore,
I listened long ago.

The clouds look down from far-off heights
At their faces in the sea;
The brown rocks lean to the swinging tides
That lap them ceaselessly;
The free salt wind, as it fans my cheek,
Brings back my youth to me.

Again with eager eyes I scan
The far horizon line.
Though many a laden ship comes in
Across the restless brine,
Though long I wait, thou comest not,
O treasure ship of mine.

A Fruitless Quest

A pair of innocent childish eyes
Shaded by ripples of shining hair,
A face with a shadow of grave surprise,
Upturned to mine with a questioning air.

“You know, Mamma, the story books say —
You’ve read to me from them hours and hours —
That fairies love in the night to play,
But sleep all day in the hearts of flowers.

“So I thought, this drowsy afternoon,
When even the birds forget to peep,
Rocked by the soft, sweet winds of June,
I could find a fairy fast asleep.

“From hawthorne hedge to jasmine bower,
I’ve hunted the whole wide garden through.
I’ve sought in the heart of every flower
For glittering wings of silver hue.

“I startled the humming bird from the rose;
The bluebells shook out the honey bee;
The butterflies glanced where the foxglove grows,
But nowhere a fairy could I see.

“’Tis told in many a tale you’ve read
That they sleep in flowers and drink the dew;
But now,” and the earnest face grew sad,
“I think, Mamma, it isn’t true.”

I kiss the dear little doubting maid,
And send her, comforted, back to play,
But I think, “Alas! what dreams must fade
Ere that shining head grows silver gray!”

My Neighbor's Rose

Fair roses from far countries
 Around my portals twine ;
Bright on their radiant faces
 Caressing sunbeams shine ;
But my neighbor, over yonder,
 Has a fairer rose than mine.

I see his pretty cottage
 Beyond my garden bowers ;
High o'er it, tall and stately,
 My shadowing mansion towers ;
But my neighbor's Rose of roses
 Is sweeter than my flowers.

'Tis Rose, his winsome daughter,
 Blooming in that tiny place,
A simple wildwood floweret,
 With unaffected grace,
While the brightness of all roses
 Seems shining in her face.

I watch her from my casement
 As her light step comes and goes ;
I listen to the music
 That from her young lips flows ;
And I covet from my neighbor
 His peerless, priceless Rose.

I wonder if, transplanted
 From her simple home to mine,
Would she thrive, the same sweet blossom,
 O'er my lonely life to shine,
Or, like wildwood flower transplanted,
 In my shadow droop and pine.

I have another neighbor,
 A lady proud as fair ;
Her eyes outshine the jewels
 That light her dusky hair,
And of many broad green acres
 She is the only heir.

All highborn gifts and graces
 In her fair self combine ;
She is courted in the ballroom
 And toasted at the wine ;
Yet, methinks, her smile is gracious
 When her soft hand touches mine.

I wonder, should I seek her,
 Could I woo her to my side?
O'er my table at the banquet
 Like a queen she would preside,
And the world would nod approval
 Should I win her for my bride:

But her cold, calm smile reminds me
 Of moonlight upon snow;
A tall and glittering iceberg
 She moves, so proud and slow,
I fear my heart would wither
 Within the icy glow.

This eve I'll go a-wooing,
 When soft the shadows fall,—
Not my lady cold and haughty
 In her ancestral hall,
But my neighbor's Rose of roses,
 Beyond the garden wall.

Coming

The long, bright summer days are almost here,
The summer bringing promised joy to me.
Her sweet forerunners one by one appear;
Her misty banners sweep the silver sea.

The wild bee revels in the rose's heart,
The bright-eyed daisies gem their grassy bed;
The wandering south wind stirs the leaves apart,
And lifts the lily's meekly drooping head.

A song of joy the heart of nature thrills;
A song of joy sing all the happy birds;
And my own heart the same low music fills;
A tender love song all too sweet for words.

Haste thee, O summer, to my Northern home!
Haste thee, O ship, across the shining sea!
Rock lightly, azure billows touched with foam!
Blow gently, winds that waft my love to me

My Pet Name

You call me by the sweet old name
 To youth and memory dear;
The years roll backward like a dream,
Once more a laughing girl I seem,
 When that loved name I hear.

Its sound recalls the gentle one
 Who first that pet name gave,
And, hearing it, I half forget
That the dear lips which hallowed it
 Are silent in the grave.

Friends tried and true, now far away—
 Ah me! the world is wide!—
Oft uttered it with voices light,
When hearts were young and hopes were
 bright,
And the future all untried.

Much doth the changeless past now hold
 Of the future of our trust,
And many a hope that gave it grace,
And many a fair and friendly face,
 Have crumbled into dust.

Too Late

Love waits without. I hear his pleading tones:

“I am aweary; let me rest with thee!

’Tis Love who at thy door thus knocks and moans,—

Love cold and faint: wilt thou not shelter me?”

“Nay, Love, thou may’st not enter! Go thy way!

The hour is late; there is no longer room.

Thou shouldst have tarried when I bade thee stay,

Amid the sunshine and the morning bloom.

“Gladly I hastened, then, to let thee in,

And dried thy dew-wet wings upon my breast;

Now I must sit beside the hearth and spin—

No longer have I time for such a guest.

“This morn thou wast a god—all earthly joy,

E’en life itself, seemed of thy gift divine;

Now thou art but an idle, teasing boy—

Go, Love, knock at some other door than mine!”

The Strange Horseman

“What seekest thou, grim horseman, pray,
In this goodly company?”
“Here in your midst I may not stay;
For a strange, far land I start today—
And who will go with me?”

He turned to a passer bent and old,
But the old man shrank away.
“I love my lands and I love my gold;
I hope to increase them many fold;
I cannot go today!”

His beckoning made a strong man quail.
“Come thou and ride with me!”
“Nay now, nay now, O horseman pale,
My wife would weep, my children wail,
If I should go with thee!”

A maiden shuddered and stepped apart
As she caught the stranger's eye:
“My lover's image is on my heart;
My lover is warm, and cold thou art:
I pray thee pass me by!”

L. of C.

A waif uplifted her small white face
And her young eyes sad to see.
“O horseman grave, I ask thy grace:
This world to me is a weary place;
I’ll gladly go with thee.”

He lifted her up to his saddle bow
For the strange and silent ride.
The pale steed faded to mist, and, lo!
Instead of the horseman with cheek of snow,
An angel glorified!

At Commencement

O valiant knight, thy spurs are won ;
Thy shoulder hath the accolade ;
Before thee lies the world's broad field :
Go forth to conflict, undismayed !

The times have need of souls like thine,
For thou wilt make no truce with wrong.
Among the false thou wilt be true,
Among the weak thou wilt be strong.

The trumpet sounds and banners wave !
“Forward !” the order rings for thee.
From lips that bless and hands that cling,
Go forth to noble destiny.

The Linnet's Song

Under an apple tree white with bloom,
A youth and a maiden meet.
High in the branches a linnet sings,
“Sweet! sweet! sweet!”

The youth looks down at the maid's fair face,
And his smiling eyes repeat
The story told in the linnet's song,
“Sweet! sweet! sweet!”

He stoops and kisses the rosy mouth,
Mid blushes shy and fleet;
While the bird on the apple bough trills with
glee,
“Sweet! sweet! sweet!”

My Old Home

I watch yon ship on her inbound track,
 With the sunlight on her sails,
And my thoughts go fondly wandering back
 To the far land whence she hails.
Swifter they fly than the roving wind
 To the Northland broad and free;
To the dear old home that I left behind
 By the shore of another sea.

Do sunbeams fall on its sentinel trees
 As brightly as of yore,
And light boughs quivering in the breeze
 Throw shadows across the floor?
On woodbine twining about the eaves
 Do tints of autumn glow,
And wild birds under the latticed leaves
 Flit softly to and fro?

I know there are girlish steps still heard
 In and out of each well-known room,
And a light voice sings like a happy bird
 In the twilight's gathering gloom;

Yet come the tears into gentle eyes
At the sound along hall and stair,
As thoughts of the wandering one arise
Whose voice was once heard there?

O childhood's friends, O childhood's home,
Far over the sounding sea,
Though many a mile of ocean's foam
Separate you and me,
Yet love recks nothing of change or space,
And here on a distant strand,
My spirit holds in its fond embrace
The loved of that northern land!

An Echo

Please God you find one face there
You loved when all was young.

—*Charles Kingsley.*

Sweetheart of mine, "when all the world is old,"
And we have wearied of life's pretty toys,
When radiant hope is but a phantom cold,
And cold the grave where lie our perished joys,
When all the gleam has whitened in my hair,
And all the luster faded from your eyes,
When all the past seems incomplete and bare,
And the dark river close before us lies,—
I think, if I may hold your hand in mine,
I shall not fear the daylight's growing gray,
Nor at the irrevocable past repine,
Knowing that you have loved me all the way.

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